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Reports on achievements in surveying, mapping and charting in addressing national, subregional, regional and global issues, including policy and institutional issues

Experience at the fifteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific

Paper submitted by the Permanent Committee on Geographic Information Systems Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific**

Introduction

The fifteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific (UNRCC-AP) was successfully held at Kuala Lumpur from 11 to 14 April 2000, receiving more than 200 participants from 34 countries/areas, sharing relevant information through 13 professional presentations by invited speakers and prioritizing and endorsing important resolutions for the promotion of geographic information in the region. This great success was due to the strong commitment and efforts of the host country, Malaysia, directed by Dato' Abdul Majid bin Mohamed, ex-Director-General of Surveying Mapping Department and former President of PCGIAP. However, participants noticed a difference in the content and format of the meeting from previous meetings of PCGIAP and UNRCC-AP. The programme of the fifteenth UNRCC-AP was, for the first time, jointly planned and prepared by the United Nations and PCGIAP. The present paper summarizes the outline of the fifteenth UNRCC-AP, emphasizing how the regional forum of National Mapping Organizations assisted the activities of UNRCC in the Asia and Pacific region.

What is the Permanent Committee on Geographic Information Systems Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific?

UNRCC-AP has been held every three years and has contributed greatly to the progress of the development of geographic information in the region.

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However, the secretariat of UNRCC-AP was active only during the conference period and there was no single body responsible for the execution of resolutions during the period between the holding of the successive meetings of UNRCC-AP. The necessity of a permanent committee was evident.

Article 2 of the statutes of PCGIAP states that "The Committee has been established pursuant to resolution 16 of the thirteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific (Beijing 1994) and shall operate under the purview of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific (UNRCC-AP) and submit its report and recommendations to that Conference".

Pursuant to this mandate, PCGIAP held its first meeting in 1995, inviting the directorates of national survey and mapping organizations or equivalent national agencies of the nations from Asia and the Pacific, and established the following organization structure, to work continuously.

- Executive Board
  - President, Vice-President and Secretary (who leads the secretariat)
  - Board members (up to seven representatives)
- Working groups
  - Chair and Vice-Chair
  - Working group members

To confirm progress of the work of the committee, members meet once a year and Executive Board members meet once every six months. The committee members also participate in related international meetings in the name of PCGIAP and pursue liaison activities. The working groups execute their work plans endorsed by the Executive Board and the Secretary and secretariat assist the overall activities of PCGIAP directed by the President and Vice-President.

With the success of the fifteenth UNRCC-AP with PCGIAP involvement, the concept of a permanent committee has been validated.

How PCGIAP is incorporated at the fifteenth UNRCC-AP

The PCGIAP meeting was incorporated for the first time in the fifteenth UNRCC-AP under the theme: "Fifteenth UNRCC-AP — A Milestone for Sustainable Development".

UNRCC-AP is held every three years, the fourteenth UNRCC-AP having been held in Bangkok in February 1997. In Bangkok a number of resolutions charged the PCGIAP with carrying out certain actions. The fifteenth UNRCC-AP provided the opportunity to report on the status of these resolutions and to report on and assess the considerable progress made by PCGIAP working groups towards the development of the Asia-Pacific Spatial Data Infrastructure (APSDI).

The fourteenth UNRCC-AP recommended that the fifteenth Conference have a primary focus on the continued and strengthened contribution of geographic information (from PCGIAP's core activities of surveying, mapping and charting) in support of the implementation of Agenda 21 and its emphasis on sustainable development. The United Nations, PCGIAP and invited speakers related their reports and presentations to the support being provided to sustainable development through geographic information activities.

Each member State of PCGIAP was invited by the United Nations to form a delegation to the meeting, and experts in surveying, mapping, GIS and related activities were invited as guest speakers. Countries outside the region also participated and a large number of observers were in attendance. United Nations representation was from the Economic and Social Council, the Statistics Division and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Twenty-six countries in the region and eight from outside attended. There were over 100 participants from the 34 countries and close to 100 observers, as well as 13 invited speakers.

Programme of the fifteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific

The programme of the fifteenth UNRCC-AP is described in both the official United Nations report

(E/CONF.92/1) and the report on the proceedings prepared by PCGIAP (www.pcgiap.org/kl/klrep.htm). They shed light on what happened at Kuala Lumpur from two points of view. The fifteenth UNRCC-AP was successful in providing new contents in the conventional format of United Nations meetings by joint cooperation between the United Nations and PCGIAP.

The largest differences were:

1. The strong emphasis on invited papers from representatives of international bodies and experts in related fields. This well-balanced programme was mainly developed by Bob Irwin, member of the former secretariat of PCGIAP, i.e. the Australian Surveying and Land Information Group.

2. The fifteenth UNRCC-AP, incorporating the 6th PCGIAP meeting, enabled the agendas of both meetings to be run in tandem. It should be noted that there was no independent meeting of PCGIAP except for the PCGIAP Executive Board meeting.

Monday, 10 April

- PCGIAP Executive Board meeting

Tuesday, 11 April

- Opening ceremony
- Opening of the Conference
- Election of the Conference Chair, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur
- Objectives of the Conference
- Organizational matters
  - Rules of Conference procedure
  - Adoption of the Conference agenda
  - Establishment of Conference Committees and election of Conference Committee Convenors and Rapporteurs
  - Organization of Conference work
  - Credentials of representatives to the Conference
- PCGIAP reports
  - Executive report: President, Dato' Abdul Majid
  - Working group 1: Rudolph Matindas
  - Working group 2: Peter Holland
  - Task force: Drew Clarke
  - Question and discussion
- UNRCC-AP reports
  - Resolutions of the fourteenth UNRCC-AP
  - Tabling of country reports

Wednesday, 12 April

- Invited Papers Session 1. Global sustainable development indicators (SDI) initiatives: Session Chair: General A. K. Ahuja
  - Agenda 21 implementation issues, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations
  - Global SDI and emerging nations — challenges and opportunities for global cooperation, Derek Clarke, Chair, Global SDI Steering Committee
  - International Steering Committee for Global Mapping: Current Status and Future Plans and Challenges, Professor John E. Esters, Chair, International Steering Committee for Global Mapping
  - United Nations-International Federation of Surveyors, Bathurst Declaration on Land Administration for Sustainable Development — the role in spatial data infrastructures, Professor Ian P. Williamson, Head, Department of Geomatics, University of Melbourne
- Invited Papers Session 2. Regional SDI initiatives: Session Chair: Mr. Saeid Noori Busherhi
  - Formation of the United Nations Permanent Committee on GIS for the Americas, Mr. Santiago Borrero-Mutis, President, Permanent Committee on SDI for the Americas
  - Geographic names and the Asia-Pacific Spatial Data Infrastructure (APSDI), Professor John Parker, immediate past Chairman of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical

Names, Asia South-East, Pacific South-West Division

- The role of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in APSDI, Dr. Wu Guoxiang, Chief, Space Technology Applications Section, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Thursday, 13 April

- Invited Papers Session 3. International scientific bodies: Session Chair, Professor Yang Kai
  - Surveying issues and challenges for the twenty-first century, Mr. Robert Foster, President, International Federation of Surveyors (FIG)
  - Leading edge cartographic developments and challenges, Dr. Bengt Rystedt, President, International Cartographic Association (ICA)
  - Densification of global geodetic networks, Mr. John Manning, Chairman of the International Association of Geodesy (IAG) Subcommission on South-East Asia and the Pacific
  - Corporatization of National Mapping Agencies — issues and challenges, Professor I. Richard Groot, International Institute for Aerospace Survey and Earth Sciences
- Invited Papers Session 4. Sponsor activities: Session Chair: Dr. Yoshihisa Hoshino
  - World Bank support for emerging nations — the role of geographic information, Mr. Frank Byamugisha, Principal, Rural Development and Natural Resources Unit, Development Research Group, World Bank
  - The role of geographic information in the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) programmes across the Asia and the Pacific region, JICA, read by Mr. Shoichi Matsumura, Geographical Survey Institute, Japan
  - GIS development and challenges in Pacific island nations, Mr. Alf Simpson, Director, South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC)
- Parallel Committees
  - Cadastral
  - Geodesy
  - Fundamental data
  - Development needs
  - Geographical names

Friday, 14 April

- Reports and resolutions
  - Reports from Conference Committee Convenors
  - Adoption of reports and action plans
  - Adoption of resolutions
  - Next meeting of PCGIAP in 2001
  - Next UNRCC-AP in 2003
- Election of PCGIAP Executive Board and concluding session of Conference
  - Review of the achievements of the Conference
  - Provisional agenda of 16th UNRCC-AP
  - Adoption of the report of the 15th UNRCC-AP
  - PCGIAP statutes
  - Election of PCGIAP Executive Board
  - Concluding remarks
- PCGIAP Executive Board meeting

Output of the fifteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific

Resolutions

Five Conference Committee meetings were held in parallel to develop resolutions for consideration by the Conference on the following three years' activities and to cover issues such as:

- Progress on work plans of current working groups and the need to continue their work;
- The possibility of forming additional working groups;

- Structure and work plans of working groups after the Kuala Lumpur Conference.

The resolutions proposed by the Committees and adopted by the Conference are available at www.pcgiap.org/unrcc/april00.htm.

Conference Committee 1 — Cadastral

- Bathurst Declaration on Land Administration for Sustainable Development
- The establishment of a working group on the cadastre
- Economic aspects of modern surveying, mapping, geospatial data infrastructure and land administration programmes

Conference Committee 2 — Geodesy

- Regional geodetic infrastructure

Conference Committee 3 — Fundamental data

- Fundamental data

Conference Committee 4 — Development needs

- Institutional strengthening, education and training

Conference Committee 5 — Geographical names

- Promotion of national and regional geographical names standardization programmes

Elections

Outcome of PCGIAP elections held at the Conference:

Executive:

President — China (Professor Yang Kai)
Vice-President — Australia (Mr. Peter Holland)
Secretary — Japan (Mr. Motoyuki Kidokoro)

Board:

Brunei, Cook Islands, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, the Philippines and the Russian Federation

Working Group:

Working Group 1 (Regional geodesy) — Australia

Working Group 2 (Fundamental data) — Islamic Republic of Iran

Working Group 3 (Cadastre) — Malaysia

Working Group 4 (Institutional strengthening) — the Philippines

Next meetings

The seventh PCGIAP meeting is scheduled for Tsukuba, Japan, from 24 to 27 April 2001. The 16th UNRCC-AP will be held in 2003.

Conclusions

A regional forum of National Mapping Organizations such as PCGIAP can play a significant role in promoting and advancing common issues considered by the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences.

References

PCGIAP (1999): Statutes, effective as amended on 22 April 1999, www.pcgiap.org/pcstat_c.htm.

PCGIAP (2000): Proceedings of the fifteenth UNRCC-AP, incorporating the sixth PCGIAP meeting, www.pcgiap.org/kl/klrep.htm.

United Nations (2000): Fifteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific, Kuala Lumpur, 11-14 April 2000, Report of the Conference (E/CONF.92/1).

Contact point

Inquiries on the present report should be referred to the following focal point at the PCGIAP secretariat. Information on PCGIAP is also available at www.pcgiap.org.

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